

Community Environmental Advisory Commission Agenda

Regular Meeting

October 20, 2021 - 05:00 PM

Online Meeting

Members Present: Max Dalton, Indigo Davitt- Liu, Tess Dornfeld, Mathew Douglas-May, Sandy Fazeli, Lauren Fleming, LesLee Jackson, Barbara Lunde, Erin Niehoff, Nicholas Minderman, Jaqueline Zepeda (Quorum - 8)

Members Not Present: Mark Dhennin, Divine Islam, Anna Johnson, and Toya Lopez

Staff: Kim W. Havey, Julia Evelyn

Guests: Hannah Bohn Jenkins (incoming CEAC member), Suzanne Savanick Hansen (incoming CEAC member), Kellie Kish (Public Works - Solid Waste & Recycling, City of Minneapolis), Maddie Henderson

Call to Order

1. *Roll Call.*

11 members present.

2. *Adoption of the agenda.*

3. *Acceptance of minutes*

[September 23, 2021 Community Environmental Advisory Commission](#)

Sandy Fazeli made a motion to approve the agenda and accept the minutes from September 22. Tess Dornfeld seconded.

Consent

Location: Online Meeting, Dial-In Number: 612-276-6670 Phone Conference ID: 226 059 955#

Land Acknowledgement: As we meet here today, we are reminded that Minneapolis is situated on the homelands of the Dakota people. An area that is steeped in rich Indigenous history, it is home to Indigenous people from more than 30 different nations. As a City, we have a responsibility to care for the land on which we live and work and all its natural surroundings. This stewardship is an integral part of our involvement in this commission, and we honor it as we begin our meeting. We now open this space to discuss ways in which we can support Indigenous people in our community.

Welcome and Introduction of new CEAC Commissioners: Meron Demissie, Hannah Bohn, Suzanne Savanick Hansen and Madeliene Henderson.

Presentation:

[Plastic Production, Recycling and Policies to Reduce It](#) - Kellie Kish, City Waste and Recycling

Kellie Kish gave a presentation about the process of recycling and highlighted a few items that are not recyclable, such as plastic bags / other “tanglers” and pak tech packaging. She also discussed cart

contamination with the recent recycling sort, the cost to recycling facilities of plastic bags in recycling carts, and common recycling questions.

Discussion

Comment (from chat): Wait times to get a new cart are very long. I've been waiting since July 29th

- Public Works is very understaffed right now, which leads to long wait times for new carts or cart repair because all of the employees are needed for pick ups.

Question (from chat): A lot of the plastic waste I have is foil lined bags like from chips, those aren't accepted with the films are they?

- These are not accepted. Plastics that can be stretched in both directions are generally always recyclable at the proper drop off, while plastics that are stiff and can't be stretched are generally not.

Comment (from chat): More on the number symbols from Planet Money episode on the history of plastics (fossil fuel) industry schemes to protect their profits by allaying fears about plastics pollution with misleading recycling PR: <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/11/912150085/waste-land>

NPR article: <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/11/897692090/how-big-oil-misled-the-public-into-believing-plastic-would-be-recycled>

How plastics support continued fossil fuel production:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/18/twenty-firms-produce-55-of-worlds-plastic-waste-report-reveals>

Are there particular ways that CEAC can support this work?

- The Health Department has been intending to make Green to Go initiatives happen, e.g. no straws or silverware unless requested, no black plastics.
- It helps to get litter out of streets and waterways, to minimize pollution to keep the environment clean.
- There are not specific asks related to policy at this time, but there are many policies in process especially at the federal level.
- <https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/pollution-act/>

How much contaminated plastic waste is going to HERC to be burned?

- Right now, any 1, 2, or 5 plastics (excluding black plastics) that are put in the recycling bin are going to be recycled as long as they are properly sorted. Our 9.3% contamination rate is the percent of materials from the recycling center that goes to HERC or is managed in another way (hazardous waste such as propane tanks or batteries). However the facility doesn't record the specific breakdowns of what the City sends to be burned at HERC by material.
- The Hennepin County waste sort in 2016 would have more information on the amount of plastics that are being burned at HERC. The City is planning to do a capture rate study next year to understand more about this exact question.
- The City partners with Eureka Recycling to offer recycling center tours.

Is there a plan to monitor air pollutants at HERC?

- HERC is a County facility so the City does not have information on the specifics of the facility's operation.

What do you do with hospital waste? Is there a separate incinerator?

- Hospital waste is not picked up by the City, but it's likely that waste that is not biomedical or biohazard goes to HERC. Biohazard waste goes to different, specific facilities.

Is there going to be an incentive program for recycling? The City used to apply credit to utility bills for people who recycle but this program doesn't happen anymore.

- When the City switched to single stream recycling, the base fee for recycling/waste was reduced to essentially give everyone the credit that used to apply to utility bills.

Has the City worked with other cities on their recycling programs?

- Yes, Minneapolis works with other cities often. Seattle is a particular case because they own all of their transfer stations, which gives them more control over studies.
- Our contamination rate of 9.3% is actually very low for a major metropolitan area.

Talk more about black plastics and restaurants?

- Black plastics are not recyclable, but they are included in the classification of 1, 2, and 5 plastics which is why they are currently allowed.

Is there any chance of a plastic bags ban being allowed at the state level? Or are we stuck with the 5 cent fee?

- The only way this could be overturned at the state level is to get support from elsewhere in the state, in greater MN. This would probably take a year or two to start enforcing, and then after that would be a good time to increase the fee.

Regarding takeout containers and Styrofoam, are there plans for incentives to transition to alternative, recyclable or sustainable products?

- Styrofoams and clamshell plastics (#6) have not been allowed since 2016, so restaurants using them are in violation of the City ordinance. There were incentive programs when the ordinance went into effect but there are not any currently.

Is Minneapolis ever planning to move away from single-stream recycling as opposed to sorted?

- The industry in the US is mostly single sort, so it would be difficult to transition back to a multi sort program.
- When we transitioned to single sort, we saw a 30% increase in volume of recyclables and an increase in participation.

Is there going to be additional language in the Green to Go ordinance regarding compostable items as well as recyclable?

- Facilities will only accept items that are BPI certified, meaning they will fully break down with no unnatural byproducts.
- City ordinances and State laws don't generally call out specific company names, so it can be difficult to specify what exactly is compostable and what is not.

Is there a way that plastic bag manufacturers can be charged for manufacturing plastic bags?

- This could be done at the federal level, and maybe the state level, but at the city level this has not been done.

Additional resources and contact

kellie.kish@minneapolismn.gov

COVID waste behavior survey results: <https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/media/content-assets/www2-documents/departments/2020-Waste-Behavior-Survey---1.28.21---final.pdf>

Discussion:

1. *Update Science Based Targets Guidelines for Cities*
2. *Approval of the [100% Renewable Electricity](#) by 2030 Blueprint (100 RE) comments letter*

Nick Minderman recused himself from the conversation due to his employer.

How are the amounts of renewable and non-renewable energy calculated?

- The 100RE Blueprint is more of a guide on how to develop policy going forward rather than giving specific and technical goals on how to increase the use of renewable energy. What the City needs to do is figure out the amount of power we need overall if we do this. The City Council has taken a position that it does not include nuclear power in renewables, so the City needs to get to 100% renewable electricity.

LesLee Jackson makes motion to approve letter as written. Lauren Fleming seconds. Motion passed.

3. *Update on Met Transit plans for EV bus purchases*

The Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee will hear a presentation on the proposed Transportation Capital Improvement Program (CIP) plan for 2022-2027 in October.

The proposed CIP includes nearly \$61 million for electric buses and infrastructure above and beyond what we would spend if we were purchasing only diesel buses. This includes eight 40-foot electric buses in 2022 funded by the federal Low and No Emission grant. This also includes funding for 70 electric buses in 2025, which would represent all 40-foot buses we plan to procure that year.

The plan will also show additional opportunities to purchase electric buses if we receive additional funding. Currently, this shows up in the unfunded portion of the CIP. The unfunded portion includes 30 electric buses between 2022 and 2024 if the PUC approves Xcel Energy's proposed electric bus rebate plan currently under review. The unfunded portion also includes a placeholder of an additional \$119 million for 155 electric buses and infrastructure in 2026 and 2027 that would result in all 40-foot diesel buses scheduled for replacement in those years being electric if the technology is viable. These plans are contingent on the technology being ready and reliable.

All of this is taking place in the context of the Zero Emissions Bus Transition Plan work we are doing. Metro Transit kicked off the Zero Emission Bus Transition Plan in July. The three Guiding Principles under development are: Technical Viability, Equity & Environmental Justice, and Financial Impact. An assessment is underway to review Metro Transit's service, fleet, and facilities to identify opportunities for successful transition to zero emission bus technology. The plan will prioritize

opportunities into the short (present -2025), medium (2026-2030) and long term (beyond 2030) using the Guiding Principles as the foundation. This plan is due to the legislature in February 2022. Next year we will update our CIP investment plan to reflect these opportunities to transition our fleet towards zero emissions.

Old Business

Update on Roof Depot, UHT and CEAC membership

Roof Depot: From CM Cano's office, the earliest there would be demolition at the site would be early in 2022. CM Cano has been holding a number of meetings on the subject. If commissioners are interested in joining those meeting, contact Chair Erin Neihoff to get more information.

UHT: City Council recently approved the Integrated Plan to do infrastructure improvements and put into place the concept plan (entertainment facility, park space, etc.). The City is still working on sustainability processes at the site.

Notes from groups in google doc: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/18pc-wpLGKNHaySLiyMFNXxOkVVMdgK7CmUfDFnY6M6o/edit>

Updates and Announcements from Commissioners and staff

- Science Based Targets small group meeting #2 is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct 27th, 5-7pm.
- CEAC has a table at Open Streets Minnehaha on Sunday, Oct. 24, 11am-5pm, to connect with community members about environmental concerns.
- All City boards and commissions will continue to meet virtually through the month of October as the City's emergency declaration has been extended for 3 months. This emergency declaration has not yet been extended again, so it is possible the November meeting will be in person.
- Four new CEAC commissioners will join the meeting next month.
- [Take the Bike and Scooter Survey](#) and see the new [mobility RFP](#)
- Community Meeting on [Monday October 18th](#) to discuss Environmental Justice and Sustainability at the Upper Harbor Terminal.

Possible Future CEAC Meeting Topics:

- Presentation on City Mobility Options and RFP – November
- Carbon Free Zones and gas free development
- Setting science-based Climate Goals – November
- Lyft scooters, bikes and mobility hubs
- Metro Transit EV bus purchases
- Rebuilding on Lake Street and the guidelines for rebuilding
- Carbon free zones and gas free development. Electrification, ground source heat pump technologies
- G21 Report - the future of fossil gas - GPI

Adjournment

Notice:

A portion of this meeting may be closed to the public pursuant to MN Statutes Section 13D.03 or 13D.05.

Next Community Environmental Advisory Commission meeting: November 17, 2021 from 5-7 PM

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact the City Coordinator's Office at 612-673-2563 or e-mail sustainability@minneapolismn.gov. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-263-6850. Para asistencia 612-673-2700 - Rau kev pab 612-673-2800 - Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay 612-673-3500.